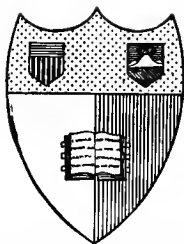


ELLEN:

A

POEM FOR THE TIMES.



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ELLEN.



# ELLEN:

A

POEM FOR THE TIMES.

by  
G. H. Calvert

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ELLEN.



# ELLEN.



## I.

A SUNNY brook, on whose clean floor the stones  
Sparkle unstained, that suddenly befoul,  
Deep at its forest-head, putrescent bones  
Thrust there by murder done beneath night's cowl  
On trustful travellers, whose unpitied moans,  
Heard but in Heaven, were married to the howl  
Of wolves,—the brooklet's laughing life bedimmed,  
Its glad pellucid pools with poison brimmed :

## II.

A sward-bound bed the sun and earth and air  
    (Wedding their blissful craft at beauty's hest)  
Have hid with flowers, so fresh, so flashing fair,  
    With tender-tinted flames they seem possest,  
When swiftly,—as if Hell's subjacent lair  
    Into their veins had shot a biting pest,—  
They fall disbloomed, their sweetened delicate breath  
Quenched in the blackness of unsavory death:—

## III.

What image else can hang within your eyes  
    Nature disrupted, thwarted, maimed and bleak,—  
Ocean senseless to wind, a Paradise  
    Ravished of blossoms,—such will faintly speak  
What were those youthful women who in guise  
    Of modest maidenhood, so flattering meek,  
Welcomed Horatio, whose unhardened skin  
Flushed ruby at the sudden thought within;—

## IV.

Then swift the bashful blood rewarmed his heart,  
And pale, an anger'd eye he cast around  
For the false comrade who had played the part  
Of trifler with him ; but as swift the wound  
Healed of itself. An impulse then to dart  
Forth from the gairish room, and at a bound  
Heaven's air rebreathe, shot through him. That, too,  
died ;  
And almost ere it parted, at his side

## V.

Spake one whose sleepy yearning tones were links  
Of chain whose other end a lisping child  
Bound to her mother's lap a dimpled minx,  
Who in the mother's plundered bosom piled  
Such heaps of love they brimmed the very brinks  
Of joy at times, and overflowed in mild  
Unwitnessed tears, which quick were sunned away  
By arch look of the little girl at play.

## VI.

Where two small velvet valleys greenly met,  
To slope as one towards darkened Hudson's shore,  
Their cottage nestled by a rivulet  
That ran outleaping from the shadows hoar  
Of stormy oaks, and, prattling with her, wet  
The fondling's feet, and made her fingers more  
Like bursting rose-buds, as in sultry heat  
She dabbled in it with her hands and feet.

## VII.

A playmate was she of the blossomed trees,  
The first to spy the unlooked-for gleaming rings  
Of wild flowers in the grass, as at her knees  
New violets peeped from their cold coverings  
To watch her joy. The summer-heated bees  
Sang round her, as she were of honeyed things,  
And birds near her in Eden were and lighted  
Upon her shining shoulder unaffrighted.

## VIII.

When the fleet years had poured into her veins  
The rapid juice of more ambitious blood,  
Her little longings leaped to loftier gains  
And taught the senses wider walks. The flood  
Of the quick rivulet,—more quick with rains,—  
She mounted gleesome to its lowering wood.  
There mystery answered mystery, and the deep  
Dim silence, like to sense-upfolding sleep,

## IX.

Unlocked her soul and loosed a brood of thought  
That ranged for food within the obscurer caves  
Of umbrage, where in rock-strewn dusk were taught  
The hushed delight of awe that, like the waves  
Of untrod ocean, is with tidings fraught  
From worlds which vast imagination laves.  
Thence with the mimic cataracts she bounded  
Back to her home with naked feet unwounded.

## X.

The mould-exhalèd balms of many springs  
So fed the fragrance of her breathful day,  
That she was like the perfumed offerings  
Of a wild wilderness of buds to May.  
So dashed were eye and cheek by tints from wings  
Of mounting morns, dyed was the mortal clay  
In light as from a heaven-expirèd air ;  
And sunbeams hid them in her golden hair.

## XI.

Not closer did the summer-shrunkn brook  
Cling to its pebbly bed, than the bereft  
Deserted mother worn, with heart and look  
To the one single child, all that was left  
To love of her own blood. Her eyelids shook  
Heart-moisture on the sleeping girl, a theft  
Of covert sorrow from the darkness,—tears  
Folded by day within blind bodeful fears.

## XII.

Death grasping her pale child—this was the view  
Old dolours graved upon a bruised brain.  
And they were kind ; for had they limned the new  
Unheralded rank truth, so near, the pain  
Had rift her clay ; for when it fell it slew  
Her earthlife at a stroke ; and now the rain,  
That made the brook laugh with her laughing child,  
Wets sod above her lonely body piled.

## XIII.

Fair Death ! who look'st so dark because our sight  
Is dim with reek from godless fears ; so dread  
Because our loves are lawless ; whose deep night  
Is but a drooping cloud, disgorged and fed  
And nursed by howling fantasies that blight  
The fresh heart's sunshine, so thy name is wed  
To hideous thoughts men call thee Terrors' King,  
In joy forefeeling cold thy fated sting,

## XIV.

And at thy coming crouch, like a new guilt  
Before old conscience' doomful eye awaked.  
Dear Death ! grimed earthlings are we, and have built  
Our life with faithless mortar, whence is shaken  
So sharp a dust about our heads thou wilt  
Forgive our blindness, that we still have quaked  
'Fore brain-coined demon at the name of thee,  
High handmaid of our immortality !

## XV.

Eternal beckoner to upper seats !  
'Twixt earth and Heaven winged carrier sure and  
swift ! [heats  
Life-quick'ning Death ! who seem'st to quench the  
Thou dost redress with finer life and gift.  
Haunted by glib imagination's cheats,  
This fear-filled mother watched for thee to lift  
Thy scythe and make her hearth a wilderness,  
And choke her veins with grief and loneliness.

## XVI.

But when dishonor's loathly blastment crept [blown  
Upon her child's warm breathing pure,—smooth  
From the hell of a cold lustful heart, while slept  
A dream-disturbed innocence,—a moan  
Rent her twin being, and the spirit leapt [shone  
Up towards its home, where Death the demon  
A God, relinking her to the lorn child,  
Her beautiful, soft, loving girl defiled.

## XVII.

So by redeeming Death are sped the senses,  
A deepening freshening insight she did gain  
Through earth's fierce fumes and vacant violences  
And all the fevered joys that nourish pain,  
Such insight far, distracted innocences  
Now almost seemed what had been sinful stain:  
Through sifted disencumbered thought she smiled  
Upon her anguished flesh-imprisoned child.

## XVIII.

Was due this heaven-lit smile to the new friend,  
God's holy harvester, the Archangel Death ;  
For with the lights that calm around her blend,  
And privileges goodness doth bequeath,  
Content can see that toward the loved one tend  
So fast Death's muffled feet, her sighful breath  
Grows less and less ; wherein the mother joyed,  
Even as when the blue-eyed babe she toyed.

## XIX.

And the lone-watched one, she at times would turn,  
As though she felt her mother's voice ; and then  
The cottage by the brook itself would burn  
Into her eyes, they staring strange, of ken  
All vacant, till,—short respite given,—the stern  
Loathed present seized and crushed her in a den  
Of reptiles cold, created of her wings,—  
A cherub's plumes self-changed to scalding stings.

## XX.

Horatio looked into those large blue eyes,  
Now the dull haunts of homeless wincing woes,  
Once joy-flamed angels in a paradise ;  
And tenderly he read her spirit's throes,  
And reading, inly sighed her woman's sighs,  
And tuned his breath to such warm life as blows  
From April's cheeks to dry the frosty dew  
An unschooled night hath dropt on violets new.

## XXI.

In wonderment looked she upon his eyes.  
Like a lost swimmer who on a sudden feels  
His feet buoyed by a rock, delight's surprise  
Vaults full her being, and she hears the peals  
Of her hushed maiden laughter, as far cries  
Are heard in dreams : then quick her mother steals  
Into her sight, part interfused with him  
Who stands there, overt angel, clear and dim.

## XXII.

For many moons, no, not for a dread year,—

Not since that wild hour when, convulsèd pale,  
She left the cottage with a shuddering fear,

That yet foretold but tithe of garnered bale,—  
Had sound of love wooed her wan starvèd ear.

No new-come infant with more easeful hail  
Doth pallid mother prayerful greet than she  
Those strange low words of bashful sympathy.

## XXIII.

They lifted her above the tainted waste,

Where holiest feelings are disfranchised quite,  
And the heart's fairest garnitures defaced,

To man's high only heaven, the self-delight  
(Mounted when he with selfless thought is braced)

Where love,—like to the God-replenished might  
Of planet-warming suns,—works outward aye,  
And lives by making for new worlds the day,—

XXIV.

For a brief moment's pasture, even to this  
 They lifted her, and she, through the mild power  
 Of that creative cadence, the gone bliss  
 Of filial duteousness refelt, in shower  
 Of thoughts that glistened o'er the bald abyss  
 Of her nude noisome life a rainbow's dower,  
 As beautifully sudden and as brief,  
 Aërial glow gilding a fen of grief,—

XXV.

From topmost life a flash, that showed the hell  
 Wherein she agonized, more ghastly dead,  
 Revealing too (what misery sought to quell)  
 A heavenly good within the spirit bred,  
 A flushing font, a sure upheaving well,  
 Which now outsparkled from its fountain-head  
 To freshen even her trampled virgin wreath,  
 Making her move aside to weep for death.

## XXVI.

Horatio turned him quickly to the wall,  
And deeply scanned a shallow picture there ;  
For he had seen the tear about to fall  
From swollen o'ertasked eyelids, and would spare  
Himself and her,—Soon at his side a tall  
Pale woman stood, of whose black eye a glare,  
Wild, restless, had one-half the lustre drunk ;  
The other back into the brain had sunk.

## XXVII.

Each feature fine was shrunken by a scar  
Cut by the crushing of three several crowns,  
An arch'd head circling once and reigning far,  
The tokens of the choice of earth's renowns  
By woman earned, each centred by a star  
That with its light all other radiance drowns,—  
The holy royalties of feminine life,  
Clasping the brow of daughter, mother, wife.

## XXVIII.

In this fast-lapsing crowded desolation,—

A noble visage marred,—beauty still throned,  
As mid the iconoclastic devastation

Of passionate throng that will not be postponed,  
And wreaks itself in vaporous elation

On statue-peopled temple, some still-zoned  
Melonian Venus stands, maimed, blackened, pelted,  
Erect, with all her fallen trophies belted.

## XXIX.

The splendor of the ruin, at a glance

Horatio seeing, in the brain there flamed  
A light so luminous, his countenance

Glowed saintly deep, to manly reverence tamed.  
On her it fell, as on one in a trance

Music unearthly. Then the past reclaimed  
Her mutinous heart, and flooding it with beauty,  
Repeopled all the desert fields of duty.

## XXX.

For a brief space she stood illuminated,

The banished loves, called sudden home, replaying  
With eye, ear, lip and cheek and hair, elated

With unsoiled breath to fill her core, and raying  
Through inmost avenues, to thought remated,—

Great loves, that are the life of life, defraying  
The costliest costs of being, with home-caressing  
Healing man's wounds, and woman hourly blessing.

## XXXI.

Whoe'er upon a lustrous face delighted,

Hath seen the headlong lapse from joy to pain,  
When one with warmest happiest eye-beam sighted,  
Reels, sinks, and dies, by unwarned death-stroke  
slain,—

Can see that radiance in a moment blighted,

As the quick ruddy flood ebbed back again,  
And she knows that she has but felt and seen  
A vision brief of what she once had been.

## XXXII.

What she had been—and what she is! O fall  
Unthinkable! Groan, nursing Nature, groan  
Through thy divinest deeps; hoarse discords all,  
Howl curst confusion's howl; loud load of moan,  
Break the strong heart of woe; black night, appall  
Hell's inmates with thy gloom; for here is grown  
A deed that outbids chaos, while the power [lower,  
That wrought this death,—the social whole,—doth

## XXXIII.

And menace more, deaf as the darkening cloud  
That clasps the earth with sleety fingers hard,  
Heedless as the sunned sea that, wild and loud,  
Outroars the wind his mate, and on the scarred  
Defenceless shore wrecks a whole navy proud,  
Smiling on victims like a springing pard.  
How long, O God! how long shall this be fate?  
O man! this needs not, must not, be thy state.

## XXXIV.

O woman ! thou, thou art a heaven-hung nest,

By soundless wings o'erbrooded, where is hatched  
Earth's paragon, Heaven's heir and 'waited guest.

Earth worships thee, and warmly art thou watched  
By prescient angels, and, by all the best

That know, exulted in as the unmatched  
Delight of whate'er lives and wills and loves,  
The central majesty to all that moves.

## XXXV.

All essences that sparkle, in their glee

Of life, upon the joy of Nature's face,  
And, quivering in the wind-waved cypress tree

Or in the leopard's gait, glow into grace,  
Or, throbbing through the wood's wild melody,

To music soar, find their selectest place  
In thee, selectest for a large fulfilment,  
And sweetest, subtlest for a fine distilment.

## XXXVI.

All integrants of being, the low and higher,  
The lords of work, the visionary powers,  
Leap with the lightnings of a holier fire  
In thee ; and, like young bees to honeyest flowers,  
Imaginations in unbought attire [showers,  
Crowd to thy brain, and, buoyed by sweetening  
Shed softly by the tenderest loves, presage  
Life's mightiness from their elected cage.

## XXVII.

The gladdened insights, intuitions named, [ings,—  
That flashing come,—so wise their swift discern—  
A freight from Heaven on sightless fibril flamed,  
Hushed duties, aspirations, holiest yearnings,  
Prime impulses most prodigally framed,  
All reap in thee their ripest inmost earnings.  
The Fates their longest ranges weave through thee,  
Sorrow and joy their deepest ecstasy.

## XXXVIII.

She is a woman, too, this haggard one,  
And those about her, some more sunken still,  
A monstrous group, each fearfully alone,  
All homeless, uncaressed, the cloven will  
Confounded, blinded, shattered on its throne  
Mid rifled loves, that naught of earth can kill,  
And whose sick pulses throb a pauseless dirge  
And all their music in one wailing merge.

## XXXIX.

And like them, there outside, that blasted throng  
Ubiquitous, stript of their woman's dues,—  
A live distemperature that saps the strong  
Well blood of manhood,—jubilant abuse,  
Defiant ever-pelting storm of wrong,  
Untuneful willingness in the strung thews  
Of myriad harps, swept by a touch so foul  
The tuneful strings yield but a barren howl.

XL.

No victor Knight beside his lady fair,  
 Mid glittering gaze of plumèd chivalry,  
 Not Bayard's self, whose deferential air  
 A bloom of inwardness was sure to be,  
 With more of Christian lustre shone than there  
 Horatio on that friendless company.  
 He full performed the gentlemanly task,  
 To see the woman still behind the mask.

XLI.

And those banned, lonesome lost ones, they were  
 saved,  
 A moment saved. A moment their soul-ache  
 Stopt beating, when the woman new was laved  
 By the resurging spirit, as in a lake  
 Of soft absolving light, and thoughts that raved  
 Around infected prison-walls, now take  
 Repose,—stilled in that namely presence pure,—  
 And tune themselves, again serene, secure.

## XLII.

E'en in the most unsexed of all, whom years  
Had more and more in fleshly bands enwrap,  
Through smeary eyelids, long unwashed by tears,  
A light (chaos with primal day-beam capt)  
Strange glistened in the unhallowed lap of leers,  
A soft maternal light inaptly apt,  
Ray from a blessing that had failed to bless,  
Sole flower in a hot weedy wilderness.

## XLIII.

In younger days she lost an infant boy,  
And the dead babe had grown within her mind  
(Angel asleep mid sensual tumult's joy),  
Until by such mute secret nurture kind  
He came to manhood, so without alloy  
She seemed in this fine form her child to find ;  
And when Horatio touched with grief she saw  
She trembled, and her heart stood still for awe.

XLIV.

Horatio's heart grew faint with tears. He slid  
 Into another room, where one meek light  
 Left unbetrayed, in stillness' ambush hid,  
 A seated figure, till at sudden sight  
 Of him, with scream quick counterchecked, it did  
 Upleap, and then relapsed as swiftly, fright  
 Outwailing, "Heaven! it is not he: No! No!"  
 Like one in the tight agony of woe.

XLV.

Gushed hot her sobs, as though voracious grief  
 Would break upon her heart a lenten fast.  
 Her tears made issue,—bringing sad relief,—  
 For his, so long inpent, and now at last  
 Free poured, as loosened brooklet after brief  
 Frost-prisonment when winter should be past.  
 Her weeping paused, to hearken to his sighs;  
 Then, soft as cloud that on a summit lies,

## XLVI.

She laid her hand upon his sleeve, and said,  
In voice with wonder weak and tenderness,  
“Who are you?” And Horatio raised his head  
To look on girlish model of distress,  
Of whose original splendor yet was dead  
Scarcely a beam,—a face made to caress  
And be caressed. “To save you I am come.”  
Like warbled welcome to supernal home,

## XLVII.

Sang to her soul the words. Up she arose  
Ere he could rise; and ere the breath was cold  
That he had uttered, 'round them were the rows  
Of sleeping houses, and wide heaven uprolled.  
Their footsteps were not effort, but repose,  
Like sway of uncaged eagle when unfold  
His wings, and he all flutterless the brow  
Shades swift of mountain, such their motion now.

## XLVIII.

They walked as though with sightless pinion urged ;  
For joy doth counterweigh the body's weight,  
And the smit soul, if rearward it hath verged,  
Rebounds against the stumbles of its mate,  
Catching at heavenward cords when most submerged.  
This trustful girl was thrown upon the great  
Thick-panting whirlpool of the nether town,  
Wherein, unhelped, she surely must go down.

## XLIX.

But when she saw those tears and heard those sighs,  
And looked upon that face ; with woman's sure  
Swift insight, and resolve as quick as wise,—  
Yielding, like the tall juicy pine, most pure  
Her balm when wounded,—nimble did she rise  
Above the slimy damps, unclean, obscure,  
Oozing from heated thoughts that thaw the will,  
And through the senses venomed flavors still.

## L.

The stars looked near and friendly on the two,

And they,—as people will when they have had  
The spirit bathed in hope or joy,—their view

Turned thankful thither, and, though she was sad  
Amid her hope, their light shone heavenly new.

Horatio moved as a strong savior glad.  
They reached her door, to have their mood redoubted;  
From a near open window thus was chaunted:

“Will you not come to me, mother,

Will you not come to me?

I am alone, I am alone.

Come to me, mother, come to me,

I am alone, alone.

Come to me, come to me,

I am alone.

“When will you come to me, sister,  
When will you come to me?  
I am alone, I am alone.  
Come to me, sister, come to me,  
I am alone, alone.  
Come to me, come to me,  
I am alone.”

## LI.

Upon these words the cadence rose and fell  
Within a single bar, now weak then weaker,  
Repeating them, revolving, like a spell  
Of weird monotony by some wild seeker.  
More than the words the tone a tale did tell,—  
A heart's deep dirge, self-sung and meek; and  
meeker  
With every repetition, till it dwindled  
To faintest flame, no more to be enkindled;

## LII.

As if one heeded, on a silent shore,  
After a season of dismasting storms,  
A corpse, white, beautiful,—from the sea's core  
Singly upthrown of all its swallowed swarms,—  
And saw it rocked, and gently more and more  
As the waves calmed, and they, now stilled of harms,  
Licked it all tenderly, the heaving sea  
Softly uplifting it repentantly.

## LIII.

Tears, tears,—gems wrought in Nature's glowing mine  
When the heart beats its truest beat,—they set  
Their liquid lustres in enravished eyne,  
To beam their brightest when large lids are wet  
With life-drops pearled in bosom feminine.  
Death's silence ranged until 'twas faintly met  
By trembling sighs. Horatio soothed her sorrow,  
Saying, when leave he took,—“To-morrow, to-  
morrow.”

## LIV.

O Sleep ! hushed nursling of the whispering night,  
Thou dost unknot the skeins of tangled day,  
And at thy bidding comes the delicate light  
Of stars to be thy watcher, while their ray  
Token sidereal is of mightiest might  
That guards thy dreamful nest ; thou dost allay  
The heartache, unbreathed torture, tameless strife,  
And whet'st the blunted tools of wearied life ;

## LV.

Thou rich man's luxury and poor man's aid,  
Kind soother of the fretted brow of care,  
Celestial dew, on drooping labor laid  
As gently as the heaving of an infant's air,  
Brisk fancy's feeder, mould wherein are made  
Imagination's marshalled grandeurs fair,  
Choice lap of jealous brooding secrecy,  
Where root the seeds of all that is to be ;

## LVI.

Sweet Sleep, thou universal comforter,  
That dost intrench us in oblivion,  
Thy daily balm thou didst withhold from her,  
The youthful, desolate, deserted one ;  
For when thou sought'st thy blessing to confer,  
Where 'twas implorèd with enfamined tone,  
And on thy bed wouldst lie as in the past,  
At the wan tremor there thou stood'st aghast.

## LVII.

By a pale figure sleep's brain-bed was haunted,  
That in frail accent said, " Alone, alone " ;  
And with a look that would not be avanted  
Kept whispering this appeal with ardent moan,  
And gazed beseechingly, as though it wanted  
Condolence from a warm companion :  
Then it grew dim and faded, like a mist  
By an ascending sun serenely kist.

## LVIII.

It soon returned, and more ethereal,  
Aye feebly syllabbling the one sad word,  
A clear transparency aerial,  
Yet plain to sight, with tone like silver cord  
Touched tenderly by breath empyrial.  
Fainter and fainter grew its mild abroad,  
Until at last it slowly disappeared,  
Leaving the charmèd ear and eye afeard.

## LIX.

But sallow fear was tinct with fellow-feeling,  
And the awe at this new life-experience,—  
That was to her mazed soul sublime revealing  
Of sights beyond the current ken of sense,  
And of the pact divine supreme unsealing,—  
Threw a halo round her dread, as round the dense  
Portentous darkness of a cloud at even  
Effulgence glows, flamed from the further heaven.

## LX.

So, by degrees her pulse ran quieter,  
A quiver of the heartstrings' play was stilled,  
As of a shoaly stream th' outflowing stir  
When by great ocean's tideful swell 'tis filled.  
She to herself was hallowed: messenger  
From God seemed to unbind her; and, unskilled  
As young thoughts are in widest themes, her being  
Ranged in the distances of new far-seeing.

## LXI.

Long hours had waned since the sure sun did steep  
The expectant air in his strong helpfulness,  
Ere she could yield her to the embrace of sleep  
And give him sway o'er all her loveliness.  
At last the wetted eyes were closed, and deep  
And even heaved her breast in quietness.  
On the soft cheek recumbent, as she slept  
Unfollowed lay the tear-drops she had wept.

## LXII.

She lay involved in beauty and in grace  
As in a limpid film of sparkling mist.  
A night-storm stamps its tumult on the face  
Of orient day, so she could not resist  
The turmoil of the past, which would displace  
The calm upon her lips. Like Venus kist  
By sooty Vulcan, her lulled features bore  
At times the torment of an inward sore.

## LXIII.

This gentle creature perill'd there, so full  
Of love and guileless life, signed with God's marks  
Of favor, intellectual, beautiful,  
Whose destiny should be the lifesome lark's  
To mount singing towards Heaven,—which to annul  
Shows compact course of the base howls and barks  
Of bestial man, envious of elevations,  
Thrust on by wanton Hell to desecrations,—

## LXIV.

Oh, 'tis a sight to summon angel-swarms [earth  
Down from their purgèd home, through threatened  
And rallied Heaven sounding their high alarms  
Against the ravage of a moral dearth.  
There lies God's masterpiece, clutched at by harms  
That maim creation's might and Nature's worth.  
Men, rouse ye from cold stupor, and be men,  
That your dear daughters deck no harlot's den.

## LXV.

The tender girl lay there asleep, enfolden  
In all the magic curves that beauty weaves.  
Myriad-eyed light, as he had ne'er beholden  
Creature more fair, blazed on her,—as on sheaves  
In ripening June,—his fiery rapture golden;  
And poet gazing, whose thrilled bosom heaves  
With inspirations from long-wooded ideal,  
Still deeper draught had drawn from fleshly real.

## LXVI.

More from the dazzlement of inward sight

Than that of beams glancing with glistening glee,  
Her eyes oped sudden, to behold a bright

Majestic woman:—"You are come for me"—  
Uttered with faith from a mysterious light.

"I am," the lady said benignantlly,  
Her face relucient with those sleeping charms:  
Then the sweet girl she folded in her arms. —

## LXVII.

On turf soft sloping to an inland bay,

That brought sure messages from far-off ocean,—  
Or through a whisper of the tidal play,

Or moody mutterings of tempestuous motion,—  
A spot where sunny Spring loves to display

His fresh habiliments and annual portion  
Of green delight, a modest dwelling stood,  
Unboastful low, and humbly built of wood.

## LXVIII.

The door looked westward, and in the after hours  
Of the ampler days thence was inhaled the glow  
Of flushed immensities, when regnant powers  
Conspire to joy recipient eyes with show  
Of golden splendency,—one of the showers  
The spirit on earth is quickened with, the low  
Necessities of sense to compensate,  
And foretaste feel of its enfranchised state.

## LXIX.

A place where commune might be lonely held  
At best advantage with wise Nature's soul,  
And hearkened to the deep discourse that welled  
Unceasing from her bosom ; for, the roll  
Of her munificence unparalleled  
Well-nigh it was, and so profuse her dole  
Of broader bounties to the chosen spot,  
It raised the bliss of contemplation's lot.

## LXX.

Beyond the narrow bay the landscape drew  
The eye through reaches undulant to hills ;  
Then to the right brought sudden close the view  
With treeless rocks high raised on granite sills,  
Whence morning's breath, sea-scented, sometimes  
blew [rills  
Thin masking mists ; when the air was still, near  
Trilled softly to an unpossessed ear ;  
And when was far away the sun, and clear

## LXXI.

The night, swift stars came down from their high bed  
To lie upon the bay's inviting breast.  
A grove of pine-trees redolent so wed  
Their limbs they were a home and motherly nest  
For birds that from the ravening snow-rage fled ;  
And of the north-winds made a near arrest  
Ere they could strike the lowly house. Old trees  
Lay around that music drew from summer's breeze.

## LXXII.

Beneath the quiet roof a household dwelt,

In home's sweet troth intertwined with triple ties :  
Grandparents with grandchildren were a belt

That smooth embraced in common smiles or sighs  
What father and dear mother keenly felt.

And now, warm sorrow surging in all eyes,  
On them, the centres, heaviest hung the gloom  
Of all, that followed each from room to room.

## LXXIII.

'Twas not the patient sorrow, ashy-hued,

Sunk by a death, that sighs internally,  
And with religious tonic balm imbued,

Uplifts the humbled spirit to be free ;  
But feverish lowness, pale incertitude,

The restlessness of toiled anxiety,  
That gnawed each member of the stricken group,  
And made their very life-strings writhe and droop,

## LXXIV.

As though there had been struck a stunning stroke  
And yet a heavier were about to fall. [awoke  
The mother's hours were strained with sighs. She  
From spectral sleep to taste a bitterer gall  
Each day : grief cradled every word she spoke.  
A daughter, blandly bright, unwonted tall  
For fifteen summers, hung about her neck,  
As she with tears her mother's tears would check.

## LXXV.

The son, but two years older, all alone  
Would sadly range afar, as though the task  
Were laid to seek one who was lost and gone.  
A prattler, six years grown, would weep and ask,  
"Is sister coming home?" with puzzled tone,  
And then in childhood's silver sunshine bask,  
Feeling with baffled sense the tearful gloom,  
Unsounded yet the deeps of such a doom.

## LXXVI.

Silent the father sat,—his wonted mood  
Of voiceful cheerfulness by dark surmise  
O'ershadowed,—stung by a spiteful buzzing brood  
Of fancies ruthless, such as tortuous rise,  
Black swarming, to infect each drop of blood  
That thrids a wounded heart, his painful eyes  
Busied with vacancy, or inward bent,  
As witnesses to some sore grapplement.

## LXXVII.

At times a shudder seized his manly frame,  
And he would stride across the room, to shake  
The horror from his 'fear, which then in flame  
Of scalding words would burst, that made all quake  
With 'grief:—"O Ellen! Ellen!—O thy name  
It burns me—O my child—my heart will break."  
His mother then would circle him, in vain  
Striving to assuage the torment of his brain.

LXXVIII.

One evening, at the height of such a scene,  
 Was brought a letter. All, between despair  
 And hope, stood still. Swiftly th' envelope's screen  
 With trembling hand the mother rent, to bare  
 The hoped dreaded contents ; then with mother's  
 mien

Outcried—"She's safe—she's saved." Upon a chair  
 The father sank, to sob his joy, the others  
 Outweeping theirs around the weeping mother's.

LXXIX.

The grandsire, more controlled than all the rest,  
 Outgave the riches of the written stores.  
 "Two weeks your child hath lain upon my breast,  
 And there for aye should lie, were she not yours.  
 So true, so fair, so pure, I should be blest  
 To keep her ever in my core of cores."  
 'Twas dated from the city near, that is,  
 The great American Metropolis.

## LXXX.

While they were listening yet, the door was oped:

All hearts leapt towards it, and the father rose  
Paternaly, to meet, not what he hoped,

But a majestic woman, the repose  
Of whose large face with glow of love was coped.

All quick re-read the letter, and their woes'  
Relief, in that sweet noble countenance,  
As warm she met their grateful glistening glance.

## LXXXI.

The father, moving towards her, suing said,

In voice o'erladen with affection's store,  
"My child, my child—where is my child?" afraid  
Almost to trust his hope. Through the half-closed  
door

Rushed Ellen, falling on his knees. He laid

His heart to hers—and all were on the floor  
'Round her, a pile of weeping happiness.

Heaven raised the lady's hands the group to bless.











